

The Graduate



About the movie

DIRECTOR	Mike Nichols
YEAR / COUNTRY	1967 / USA
GENRE	Satire/Comedy
ACTORS	Anne Bancroft, Dustin Hoffman, Katharine Ross

PLOT

This film is about an East Coast college graduate who comes home to his upper-middle-class life. He is alienated and adrift in the shifting social and sexual mores of the 1960s and questioning the values of society (with its key word "plastics"). The theme of an innocent, confused youth who is exploited, mis-directed, seduced (literally and figuratively) and betrayed by a corrupt, discredited older generation captured the spirit of the times.

Benjamin Braddock (Dustin Hoffman) is a confused, aimless character, but the pride of his wealthy, Southern California suburbanite parents who throw a party for their recent graduation, inviting all their friends - not his. Ben has no plans or direction to his life and is worried about the future. He leaves the party and goes to his room where Mrs. Robinson (Anne Bancroft) the wife of his father's partner, finds him, gets him to take her home and seduces him. The affair goes on until Mrs. Robinson's young innocent daughter Elaine (Katharine Ross), comes home and Ben falls in love with her. Mrs. Robinson, neurotically jealous, makes sure Elaine will find out. Elaine leaves him especially since her mother tells her Ben raped her. Ben follows her to Berkeley and convinces her of the truth, but when they are back together again and want to marry, Mr. Robinson threatens to put the law on Ben after his wife tells him she was raped by Ben. When Elaine is about to marry another, Ben appears in the church and....

There was a growing mood of dissatisfaction with the status quo and middle-class values during the escalation of the Vietnam War and this film mirrored that perfectly. The director, Mike Nichols, won an Oscar for this film and the Simon and Garfunkel sound track won a Grammy award.

LANGUAGE

The accents are all Southern California, middle class, fairly cultured accents. The language is not slangy and should be quite clear and easy to understand, but there are quite a few colloquial expressions. The distance between the generations is emphasized by Ben's always addressing older people as "Sir" or "Ma'am" and calling his lover "Mrs. Robinson".

VOCABULARY

Teenie-Boppers: female teenagers famous for scanty clothes and frenetic dancing College yearbook: book listing the names of graduating students and their accomplishments	Are you here for an affair, Sir ? : a double meaning here: <i>affair</i> can refer to an illicit love affair, or to a party To take stock in himself: to sum himself up To hit it off well: to be congenial
Track star: an athletics player I'm just drifting: I have no direction.	To pry (into someone's affairs): to snoop into someone else' business To liven something up: to animate something
How to work a foreign shift: how to use a foreign gearshift (in his new Alfa Romeo car) I'm mixed up: I'm confused	To kid around: to joke It's sickening: it's disgusting Give me your word: promise me
Flattered: complimented A slip: garment worn under a lady's skirt Purse: handbag	I can't stand (something/one): I can't bear someone A half-baked idea: a stupid idea Keep your wits about you: stay calm and logical
A hanger: something to hang clothes on You look shaken up - You seem upset. A nightcap: a last drink before you leave	To be up to: to be capable of A major subject the study one specializes in Sit in on a class: audit a class not for credit
Sow a few wild oats: have a few flings Someone who has to fight 'em off: someone so attractive that s/he is fought over	Where were you headed?: what direction were you going? I can prosecute you: I can take you to court
Sound advice - wise counsel	Make-out king : a man who succeeds with women